

## Volunteer Practices for the School District of Philadelphia

### Step 1. Determine if individual is considered a *volunteer* or *visitor*

- a. A ***volunteer*** is an adult who is responsible for the welfare of a child, has direct or unsupervised contact with children, or has routine interaction with children (see definitions below). *All volunteers are required to have clearances.*
  - i. An individual is “responsible for the welfare of a child” if he or she is acting in lieu of or on behalf of a parent.
  - ii. An individual has “direct and routine interaction with children” if he or she has regular and repeated contact that is integral to volunteer duties.
  - iii. **Examples of volunteers:** any parents/guardians working in schools, after school program chaperones i.e. Big Brothers/Big Sisters, chaperones on field trips that are responsible for welfare of children
  - iv. **\*\*All volunteers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect; a free training is available online at [www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu](http://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu)**
- b. A ***visitor*** is an individual who is not responsible for the welfare of a child, does not have direct or unsupervised contact with children, or does not have routine interaction with children. *Visitors are not required to have clearances but must be accompanied by a staff member on school premises at all times.*
  - i. **Examples of visitors:** one-time participants in school events, parent or guardian attending back to school night or parent/teacher conferences, presenters a Career Day, guest readers

### Step 2. If individual has volunteered in the past, determine if previously acquired clearances are still valid

- a. If an individual was volunteering before August 25, 2015 and has clearances that are older than 60 months:
  - i. **Volunteer has until July 1, 2016 to renew expired clearances; clearances now expire on a 60-month cycle.**
- b. If an individual was volunteering before August 25, 2015 and all of his or her clearances are newer than 60 months:
  - i. **Volunteer must be aware that all of his or her clearances must be renewed after the oldest clearance expires on the 60-month cycle.**
- c. If individual was volunteering before August 25, 2015 and has some but not ALL required clearances that are newer than 60 months:
  - i. **Once the volunteer’s oldest clearances expire on the 60-month cycle, clearances must be renewed and additionally required clearances will be added on at that time.**
  - ii. Example: A parent volunteering at child’s school was not previously required to have an FBI background check with fingerprinting with other clearances. Once oldest clearance expires on 60-month cycle, parent is now required to obtain a background check upon renewing Abuse History Clearance and Criminal Record Check.

**Step 3. Determine if out-of-state or other clearances are acceptable**

- a. If volunteer is NOT a Pennsylvania resident and is volunteering for *less than 30 days*, he or she may submit clearances from home state or country. These clearances must be equivalent to PA clearances.
- b. If volunteer is a PA resident OR is an out-of-state resident volunteering for more than 30 days, he or she is required to submit required PA clearances.

**Step 4. Determine if FBI fingerprinting and background check is required**

- a. If a volunteer is *has lived outside of Pennsylvania in the past 10 years* or is applying for a *paid position*, FBI fingerprinting/background check is required.
- b. If a volunteer is applying for an *unpaid position and has lived in PA for the past 10 consecutive years*, the volunteer does not need FBI fingerprinting/background check. He or she must affirm in writing that he or she is not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense under §6344.
  - i. A link to this affirmation form can be found here:  
[http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c\\_160267.pdf](http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c_160267.pdf)

**Step 5. Determine which required PA clearances are needed**

**a. If volunteer was NOT a PA resident for past 10 years consecutively:**

- i. Child Abuse History Clearance
  1. <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS/Public/Home>
- ii. PA State Criminal Record Check
  1. <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>
- iii. FBI Background Check with Fingerprinting
  1. [https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index\\_pdeNew.htm](https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_pdeNew.htm)

**b. If volunteer was a PA resident for past 10 years consecutively:**

- i. Child Abuse History Clearance
  1. <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS/Public/Home>
- ii. PA State Criminal Record Check
  1. <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>
- iii. Signed disclaimer affirming no criminal charges in other states that would prohibit selection as a volunteer
  1. [http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c\\_160267.pdf](http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c_160267.pdf)

\*If you have any questions about out-of-state clearance equivalency or the District's volunteer practices, please contact Pennsylvania Department of Education's School Services Office at 717-783-3750 or via email at [ra-pde-schoolservice@pa.gov](mailto:ra-pde-schoolservice@pa.gov)

\*\*Once a volunteer receives certifications, it is recommended that he or she retain a copy of each clearance certification for future records.